United States of America

Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 107th CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION

WASHINGTON, TUESDAY, MARCH 5, 2002

Senate

ENERGY POLICY

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I simply begin by thanking you, first, for your statement in the Chamber today, but also, more importantly, for the leadership that you, Senator Murkowski, and others have demonstrated to bring us to this point today. I cannot speak for the rest of my colleagues, but I am delighted we are in this Chamber and have begun the debate. It has been long delayed, but it is a most important debate on whether or not we are going to have an energy policy for this country of ours.

At the end of the Vietnam war, as a young naval flight officer, I moved from California to Delaware to enroll in the University of Delaware Business School. One of my earliest memories of coming to Delaware is sitting in line, waiting to buy gas for my car. We were in the middle of an oil embargo, and at that time you could only buy gas every other day. We did not have an energy policy in the mid 1970s. We do not have one today.

Twenty-eight years ago, some 30 percent of the oil we used in our country was imported. We had a trade balance that was pretty much even. There was not much of a deficit. Greenhouses at the time were something in which we grew plants. We did not worry about greenhouse gases and whether or not we would have a hole in the ozone layer of our atmosphere. That was 28 years ago. Today, almost 60 percent of the oil we consume comes from other places around the globe. A lot of it we buy from people who don't like us very much and, I am convinced, use some of the money we send them to try, in some cases, to hurt us or our interests.

Our trade deficit has ballooned to $300 billion, and not all of it but a good chunk of it is attributable to the oil we import. Today, when people talk about greenhouses, we still grow plants in them, but we also worry about greenhouse gases and what is going on with the hole in the ozone layer, what is going on with a rising global temperature, and what is going to happen to our sea level in this world over the next 100 years if we do nothing about it.

The question we are going to be answering in the next couple weeks is, What kind of energy policy should we have in this Nation?

Like most of my colleagues, I would argue that the answer to that question has two parts. One part says we create more energy. And while we work to do that, in a variety of ways, the second part says we need to conserve more energy.

Let me talk a little bit about both of those issues: First, the creation of more energy and, second, the conservation of energy.

I live in a State where, I am told, we actually grow more soybeans in Sussex County, DE, than any other county in the country. We also have more chickens in Sussex County than any other county in the country, including those in Arkansas. We can look to those soybeans for a source of energy. Frankly, we can look to those chickens as a source of energy, as well, as we go along.

We raise soybeans in Delaware to feed

chickens. We feed them the hull of the soybean. The oil that comes out of the soybean we do all kinds of things with in this country. We create soy foods, soy milk. We also can create something called soy diesel fuel: 20 percent soy, the rest is diesel. We can burn it in our diesel-consuming machines, and it works just fine. It is energy efficient. It works well in the machines, and the emissions are no worse, for the most part, than any regular diesel fuel. In some cases, they are actually better.

We have too much soybean in this country; we have a glut of that commodity. It is a good alternative to use the soybeans that are in excess on our farms to help lessen our reliance on foreign oil.

We have figured out how we can burn animal waste to derive the Btu value, including chicken litter, in ways that are environmentally friendly.

In my State, we have the biggest independent producer of solar energy panels in the country. We are proud of the work they do at AstroPower. And it is not just at AstroPower; there are places all over this country that are relying more and more on solar energy in developing evermore efficient ways to create that solar energy.

Windmill farms are becoming more common in this country. Hopefully, as we continue to perfect that technology, they will become even more efficient.

Others have spoken, and will in the weeks ahead, about geothermal energy, how we can take hot air in the summer and run it 300 feet underground to cool it off, and then use it to cool our homes in the summer; and we can take cold air in the winter, run it 300 feet underground to warm it up, and then use it to warm our homes and businesses in the winter.

Those are just some of the ideas of renewable energy that we can use, that we can rely on, that we are more relying on, and need to do more so in the future.

We also have, as Senator Bingaman said earlier, a lot of coal in this country. I think he said we are the ``Saudi Arabia of coal.'' I am privileged to represent the State of Delaware in the Senate. I was born in West Virginia. I know full well they have a lot of coal there and other places around our Nation. We ought to find ways to burn that coal without doing more harm to our environment. We can do that. Clean coal technology is very promising. We need to continue those efforts.

There has been some discussion already today about natural gas. We are starting to rely more on natural gas from other places around the world. We have a lot of it in our country. But consumption is going right through the roof because we have such good environmental consequences compared to other fossil fuels we use. There are huge finds of natural gas in the northern parts of Alaska. We ought to bring it down here and use it.

Similarly, in the Gulf of Mexico there are huge deposits of oil and natural gas that are available to us to be extracted safely and in an environmentally sound way. Those are sources on which we need to rely.

A year or so ago, I reported back to my colleagues about a trip in which I led a bunch of Boy Scouts from Delaware on down to Norfolk Naval Station. The trip was on a weekend a year ago last January. We visited a lot of ships and submarines. It was a lot of fun for the adults and for the young Scouts.

One of the ships we visited was the Teddy Roosevelt, a nuclear-powered carrier. It is about 1,000 feet long. It is about 25 stories high. It carries a crew of roughly 5,000 men and women. Underway, it has about 70 aircraft or so that it takes with it. It needs to refuel about once every 25 years--once every 25 years.

For us to walk away from nuclear power as if it is from a day gone by I think is a

mistake. I fully acknowledge the security concerns that revolve around nuclear power and terrorism. I acknowledge the legitimate concerns about disposal. But having said that, the potential is real, and we have only begun to realize it. I urge us not to walk away from that technology while we work to solve the issues regarding security, the environment, and disposal.

Another very promising area for creating new energy is fuel cells.

The idea that we can take hydrogen, which we have in abundance, and derive energy from that hydrogen and end up with a waste product that is H2O--what a bonanza, what potential.

This is 2002. By 2012, we will have cars, trucks and vans traveling the highways of America powered by fuel cells. We will have homes, buildings, and factories that are going to be powered by fuel cells.

In Government, if we are smart enough to, one, invest in the research and development; two, help commercialize those new technologies, including fuel cells; and, three, in addition to doing those things, if we will provide tax incentives to encourage producers to produce those more fuel and energy efficient, environmentally efficient, and friendly sources of energy, and to encourage consumers to buy them, we will do this country and this planet a real favor.

Let me talk about a couple of efforts on the conservation side. We will have a substantial debate on CAFE standards in the next 2 weeks. That deals with the efficiency of the cars, trucks, and vans we drive.

I would suggest we consider and keep in mind these principles as we go forward. As we seek to reduce the amount of oil our cars, trucks, and vans consume, one, let's work to find meaningful reductions in oil consumption by motor vehicles.

Two, let's set measurable objectives so we actually know we are making progress and we can measure our progress against the objectives.

Three, let's provide a reasonable time line for the auto industry to make the changes it needs to make to bring more energy-efficient vehicles to the market.

Four, let's make sure we don't get rid of, as collateral damage, the domestic auto industry; but when we finish our work in 10, 15 years from now that we still have a strong and vibrant, even more strong domestic auto industry.

Fifth, we ought to set some long-range goals for car makers and truck makers with respect to oil consumption. We should defer to other entities, to NHTSA, within the Department of Transportation, to actually do the intermediate setting of goals for fuel efficiency.

Six, we need to think outside the box with respect to the auto industry so that they have some additional tools to work with to help them get to the target we are going to set.

One of those I have already mentioned is fuel cells. Fuel cells is where we are going to be in 10 or 15 years. Today, we are, for the most part, the internal combustion engine. The bridge to the future with cars, trucks, and vans is with hybrids. We are starting to see the introduction of gas hybrid vehicles that are getting 50, 60 miles per gallon. I continue to be struck by a presentation I received from Daimler-Chrysler where they shared with us a model vehicle they could produce which gets 75 miles per gallon. It is a four-door passenger vehicle, the SX-3. They cannot sell them in this country. It is a diesel hybrid vehicle. They can sell them in Japan and Europe.

We need to work with the auto industry to help them achieve the next tier of standards, tier 2 standards, for emissions that include nitrogen oxide. We need to be mindful that diesel-powered vehicles, which

now account for about 40 percent of the sales in Europe, can do a lot to help us reduce our reliance on foreign oil and reduce carbon dioxide emissions which lead to greenhouse gasses and global warming.

The last topic I want to address is what the Government can do: One, we can invest our money, our taxpayer money in research and development in ways that will help us to create more energy and to conserve more energy.

We can use the buying power of the Federal Government on both the civilian and military side to help commercialize new technologies. If companies, particularly in America, are building more fuel-efficient vehicles, whether they are gas hybrids, diesel hybrids, and eventually fuel cells, we should use our buying power to commercialize those technologies in the marketplace.

Lastly, if manufacturers are going to build hybrid vehicles, fuel-cell-powered vehicles, that will enormously reduce our reliance on foreign oil and that are good for the environment, we should provide a tax incentive for producers to produce them and for us, as consumers, to buy them.

Two general points with respect to conservation: Air conditioners, we have the technology to build air conditioners that will cut our reliance on electricity or reduce our consumption of electricity by 30 percent. We can do that. We have the technology. We need to commercialize the technology. We ought to build them, and we as consumers ought to buy them.

On transmission lines, we have seen presented in our Energy Committee transmission lines which are able to transmit electricity across the country and reduce the loss of energy through those transmission lines by some 30, 35 percent below what is currently occurring. That is another thing we can do and ought to do in order to conserve energy.

Let me close with this: I am troubled, having felt for 28 years that we need a comprehensive energy policy, by the voices I hear inside this body, and outside, who say we are not going to agree on an energy policy.

In the wake of September 11, we must develop the political will to hammer out an agreement on energy policy that conserves more energy and produces more energy at a time when almost 60 percent of our oil comes from overseas, comes from some of the people who don't like us and who use the resources we give them to threaten us. How can we not pass an energy policy bill? We are smarter than that; we are better than that. The American people deserve better than that as well.